

Nothingness

Busy Doing Nothing for God

Suggested Reading: John 5:19ff, John 10:27f, John 15:1ff, John 20:21, Philippians 4:13

Busy doing something for God? In the eternal scheme of things, it all may amount to nothing.

From the very beginning of our Christian life together, my wife and I learned that God wanted us to live all of our lives in obedience to Him in all things. Obedience implies that we could know the will of God for the present moment. We began to listen for His voice and found that He spoke to us and directed our lives.



One day, as I was out walking, He said to me, “Without Me you can do nothing.” I replied, “But Lord, look at all the things I have done in my life without you.” And He replied, “Yes, my son, and they all amounted to nothing.”

He showed me that the good stuff, the bad stuff, and all the other stuff I did, much of it “for God,” amounted to nothing. It had no value to Him and it had no reality in the Kingdom. Why was it of no value? Because it was “my stuff,” and often “other stuff,” but not “His stuff.”

A bit later in my life I found the same message in Jesus’ teaching on the true vine in John 15. Here, Jesus tells His disciple, “Apart from me you can do nothing.”

In John 20:21, Jesus tells His disciples that in the same way that His Father has sent him, so he also is sending them. How did the Father send the Son? Jesus said that He was only doing what His father is doing and only saying what His Father is saying (present tense). Jesus knew what His Father wanted in the moment, and He did it in His Father’s timing, in His order, and in His power. Jesus walked in perfect obedience to His Father always. **We too are to do what the Father is doing and to say what the Father is saying.** This is the standard for the Christian walk.

If, then, without him you can do nothing, consider that within Him (with Him and in Him) you can do all things. In Philippians 4:13, the Apostle Paul says, “I can do all things through **Him** who strengthens me.” The Greek word for *through* in this verse is εν (en), meaning *in* or *by*. The Greek word *strengthens* is ενδυναμοω (endunamoo), to empower. We get our word dynamite from the same word. A better translation, therefore, would be, “I can do all things in (by) Him who empowers me.”

We are called to seek His guidance, to be available to hear His voice, and to walk in obedience by His power in His timing. This is doing all things with Him, in Him, and by His power. This is doing what the Father is doing.

Consider the prophet Ezekiel. Once when God spoke to him, Ezekiel was on his face before the Lord. Ezekiel 2:1–2 says, “Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!’ And when He spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me.” In the Hebrew, there seems to be a pause between verses 1 and 2. It appears that God speaks to Ezekiel a second time in verse two, and as He does so, the Spirit of God enters into Ezekiel and stands him on his feet. My sense here is that Ezekiel does not immediately jump to his feet; he waits for God to empower him for whatever God wants from him.

Or consider this example. One Monday morning, God says to Bob Faithful, “Please speak my words to the person under the chestnut tree by the bridge in the park.” “Got it, Lord,” he replies. He hops into his car and drives the 15 minutes to the park, runs to the bridge, and finds the chestnut tree. There is no one there! What happened? Bob did not wait for God’s timing and God’s empowerment; he took the guidance and made it his own to accomplish.. Bob arrived at the park at 10:25 on Monday morning. But God had 2 p.m. on Thursday in mind. Taking the guidance of God, and then making it your own and doing it in your own strength and timing is not the will of God for your life. It is nothingness.

John 10:27 says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” This is good news: we can hear His voice, and we can walk in obedience by His power and in His timing. That is doing all things with Him, in Him, and by Him...and that amounts to something.

Prayer: Engage your heart and pray: “Father, my heart’s desire is to hear Your voice and walk in obedience, doing only the things that You have for me to do. I don’t want to spend my life doing good stuff, bad stuff, and other stuff, but not Your stuff. I don’t want my life and work to amount to nothing in Your kingdom. I give You permission to speak to me, to train my heart to be available to the prompting of Your Spirit; train me to act in your timing and in your power. Lord. I want you to manifest Your Life in my walk.